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LETTER TO REV. CHARLES BEECHER.

MY DEAR BROTHER, — I have recently seen a little pamphlet, entitled "Tracts for the Times, No. 19," in which are contained two discourses, said to have been delivered at the dedication of the Second Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Iowa, February 22, 1846, by Charles Beecher. The same discourses have also been ascribed to me, by no less authority than that of the "Christian Witness," an Episcopal paper, of this city. Of course I shall not need to tell you, or an intelligent public, that this last witness is not true. Nor does it tend to increase our admiration of the geographical knowledge of our friends who have the oversight of the "Christian World," that they should locate Fort Wayne so definitely in Iowa, and circulate this recent geographical discovery so diligently through the East. Perhaps they may have heard of such a state as Indiana, and of such a man as General Anthony Wayne, and of certain military exigencies, in former days, in the neighborhood of the Miamis, which rendered necessary the erection of certain forts, all of which it is needless to specify. But for their special benefit I would give notice, that the town of Fort Wayne in question takes its name from one of these forts, and is on the upper waters of the Miami of the Lakes, in Allen County, on the east side of the State of Indiana, in township thirty north, range thirteen east, of the second principal meridian !

Having thus arranged these important preliminaries, I now come to the main object which I have in view. I wish to state and to explain a singular phenomenon, in regard to the use made



of your sermons, by your friends of the "Christian World," and others who sympathize with them.

But before I can state the phenomenon to which I refer, I must advert to the fact, that the opponents of creeds may be arranged in two very unlike classes. One class opposes creeds from a hatred of the truth; the other opposes them from the love of it.

I will say a few words respecting the first class, and then state the phenomenon in question.

This class, then, opposes creeds from fear of the pain and terrors of conviction of sin. A clear view of the evangelical system, professed and carried out into consistent action, exerts a powerful influence even on those who reject it. Painful and self-denying as are the duties it calls for, still it is based on truth.

It cannot be denied that clear definitions, discriminating views, and a natural and honest classification of the Bible, always result in bringing out this system. So German infidels admit, after renouncing the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Hence, those who reject the evangelical system are exposed to constant mental inquietude. But, instead of attacking this system directly, they sometimes attack all creeds, and ring changes on the words freedom, liberality, mental progress, bigotry, illiberality, mental bondage, base fear of inquiry, and the like.

The tendency of all who reject creeds for such reasons is, in all ages, to reject the Bible also; for it clearly contains the system which they hate. This process, of rejecting the Bible, is indeed gradual; but still it has been sufficiently rapid to be all gone over in the present generation, and before our eyes. The party which, in New England, abandoned the evangelical system, began by assailing creeds, protesting against examining ministers before licensing and settling them, eulogizing free inquiry, and rejecting all standards but the Bible. Beginning thus, they have ended in the utter rejection of the Bible itself, as an inspired book; some rejecting it totally in all its parts, as a supernatural and infallible revelation; others rejecting large portions of the Old Testament and the New; and all denying the inspiration of both, as it is held by you.

And yet, men involved in this great apostacy have rejoiced in the publication of your sermons, have republished them in a series of Unitarian tracts, and are using them, to the extent of their power, to assail those in this community, who, in practice,



above all others, make the Bible their creed, and receive it with the utmost sincerity as all given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and who believe that by it the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

This certainly is a singular phenomenon. You believe the supernatural, evangelical system; they do not. You receive the whole Bible as the inspired Word of God; they do not. You publish two sermons, with the avowed end of making the *whole Bible, as an inspired book*, the supreme and only rule; they, who are doing all in their power to destroy the authority of the Bible as an inspired book and the only rule, republish your sermons, and scatter them through the land.

Have they, indeed, lost their common sense? Do they mean to build with one hand, and to pull down with the other? Or do they mean really to come back to the Bible as you receive it, including both the Old Testament and the New, as the inspired and only rule of faith and practice?

No. The state of the case is this. Your belief in the inspiration of the whole Bible appears in your sermons, only as an opinion. You assume, but do not prove, its truth. And, little as they believe it, they are willing to circulate it, and let it have its weight as a mere opinion, for the sake of something else that they find with it; to wit, an attack upon all the evangelical Protestant denominations of Christendom, for the use which they make of creeds, and a declaration that, on this ground, they are all in a state of apostacy from God, and are on the verge of ruin. Now, those who have republished your sermons know very well that your charge does not hit them, for they have always declaimed against creeds and confessions of faith; and although you have a creed, a real and stringent creed, and one which, if it were applied, would cut them up by the roots, yet, for the sake of charging apostacy on the orthodox through you, they are willing to publish and circulate your sermons, as they have done. After bearing the charge of apostacy so long, they are glad to retort it on the orthodox in any way, honorable or dishonorable.

I say that you have a creed, stringent and exclusive; for it is a momentous thing, in this generation of infidels and pantheists, wearing the guise of Christians, honestly and heartily to believe as you do concerning the Old Testament and the New,—that



they are all given by inspiration of God. It is also an exclusive creed. Let this test be thoroughly applied to those who are so busy in circulating your sermons, and it would exclude and scatter them like the chaff before the storm. Not a fragment of their plans or systems would be left. Such is the first class of assailants of creeds.

Now, the root of all this kind of opposition to creeds lies, as I have said, in dislike of deep and thorough conviction of sin, of the endless penalties of God's law, and of the humbling and self-denying demands of the gospel.

This is plain from the fact, that even if no written creed is used or referred to, but this system is unfolded directly from the Bible, in clear and precise terms, and is insisted on as essential, in order to save the soul, it is disliked and opposed just as much as a printed creed, or a creed in any other form.

Hence, it is plain that the thing disliked is a vivid and clearly defined view of man's condition and guilt as a sinner, of the principles and eternal sanctions of God's moral government, and of the only way of salvation. So that, if these are clearly presented and insisted on, they call forth the same hostility and the same charges that are called forth by creeds.

Look at facts. In the midst of an evangelical community, an apostacy to error, and finally to infidelity, began. It at once disclosed itself, by a bitter hostility to creeds and confessions of faith, and an earnest desire that there should be no creed but the Bible, and that every man should be free to interpret it as he pleases. Meantime, the main body of the community were not convinced, but retained evangelical opinions, and regarded the apostacy as tending utterly to destroy the gospel and ruin the soul, and were earnest in advocating the truth, and proclaiming the guilt of those who teach error. Then it is that we hear from Dr. Channing, and from others, denunciations against those "who, spell-bound by early prejudice or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving, in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth, as from infection; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching that is against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence the grievous bondage which they bear themselves."



But, in fact, nothing but the Bible was at this time used. It was the only and all-sufficient creed; and yet orthodox bodies were the vast majority, so that the power of their *opinions* was great. And therefore we still hear Dr. Channing attacking the exercise of opinion itself, and declaring it "as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the inquisition." "It is true," he says, "that men are sent to the Scriptures; but they are told, before they go, that they will be driven from the church on earth and in heaven, unless they find in the Scriptures the doctrines that are embodied in the popular creed. They are told, indeed, to inquire for themselves; but they are also told at what point inquiry must arrive; and the sentence of exclusion hangs over them, if they happen to stray, with some of the best and wisest men, into forbidden paths."

So said Dr. Channing. So echoed Andrews Norton, and J. G. Palfrey; at the same time smiting down the inspiration of the Old Testament. So re-echoed Theodore Parker, rending asunder the whole Bible, and scattering it to the winds.

Now, it is of vast moment to understand well the opposition to creeds which proceeds from this source; for though it may, for a time, profess to respect the Bible, and may, to a certain extent, do so, and plead for liberty to study it as the only creed, yet it tends directly, and of necessity, to the destruction of the Bible itself. It rejects the great evangelical truths which are the substance and basis of the Bible; it rejects that regeneration and experience which they are designed to produce, and which give internal evidence of the truth and inspiration of the Bible. It leaves the mind under all the delusions of unhumbled pride, and finally shipwrecks it on the shoals of infidelity or pantheism.

It is plain, from what I have said, that I do not put you in this class of opponents to creeds; for you are a believer of the fundamental doctrines of the evangelical system. You have, I trust, a Christian experience corresponding to it and springing from it; and you receive the whole Bible as the Word of God.

Let us, then, look at a second class of opposers to creeds. With many of this class I am acquainted, and many more exist in all parts of the world. They are evangelical and sound in their doctrinal belief. They are firm believers in the inspiration of the whole Bible. They oppose creeds from a love of revealed truth, in its native purity and simplicity, and without human ad-



mixtures ; and from an assurance that the Bible is fully inspired to teach it, and teaches it more purely and more perfectly than any other book. They would not have any thing allowed for a moment to eclipse its glory, or to withdraw the mind from the full experience of its illuminating and sanctifying power.

In this class was the illustrious Spener, founder of the school of Biblical Theology in Germany, through whom God produced a great revival of evangelical and experimental religion. To show the state of the Protestant Church in Germany in his time, we take the following from an Introduction to Knapp's "Lectures on Christian Theology," by Leonard Woods, Jr., D.D. :

"The school of Biblical Theology was established by Spener, at Halle, in 1694, for the avowed purpose of having theology taught in a different manner from that common in the German universities. Spener states that it was usual for persons to spend five or six years at the universities, without hearing, or caring to hear, a single book, chapter, or verse of the Bible explained. In the few cases where expository lectures were commenced by such teachers as Olearius and Carpzov, they were soon abandoned. The Bible was, perhaps, less used before the time of Spener in Protestant universities, than it had been, under penalty of excommunication, by pious Catholics before the Reformation. In place of the Scriptures, the different symbols established by the Protestant Church were taught and studied. The minutest distinctions established by them were contended for with the greatest zeal, and the least deviation from them was pronounced heresy, as decidedly as if they had been given by inspiration of God ; and was punished, accordingly, with the greatest severity."

To correct this state of things, Spener published, in 1675, his *Pia Desideria* ; "in which he urged the necessity of amending the prevailing mode of instruction and preaching. *It was his great object to divert attention from the symbols, and direct it to the Scriptures. He wished every student to derive his system for himself directly from the Bible.*"

That his protest against the improper use of the creeds of the day was not uncalled for, is plain from the results of that use. These are stated at large by Professor Stuart, in the first volume of the "Spirit of the Pilgrims," in a review of the "Evangelical Church Journal," an organ of the evangelical party in Germany, in their efforts to recover the Protestant Church from the great infidel apostacy. Professor Stuart, in endeavoring to unfold the causes of that apostacy, refers to the very state of things against which Spener protested ; and, beginning at Baumgarten, traces



the progress from this dead orthodoxy of creeds through Semler, Eichhorn, Eckerman, Herder, Gabler, Bertholdt, Ammon, Paulus, Stäudlin, Justi, and others, down to the extreme infidel results of the present day. In view of the whole history, he says :

“The few able and undaunted adherents in Germany to the real doctrines of the Reformation, have been, step by step, retreating from all the old ground of metaphysical school theology, and coming for these twenty years gradually, and at last fully, upon the simple ground that **THE SCRIPTURES ARE THE SUFFICIENT AND THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE.**” — “In the mean time, the system of their opponents has greatly changed. *At first, much regard for the Scriptures was professed by them ; and the Bible was set in opposition to all the human systems then in vogue in the church.* But when the old systems were given up by the defenders of *true evangelical principles*, because of their repulsive form and their defective interpretation, and *the Scripture was solely appealed to* in support of these principles, and that on acknowledged maxims of interpretation, then the ground of opponents began to be shifted, as one might easily suppose.”

Step by step they abandoned all belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures, and took the ground of infidelity. How exactly like this has been the course of events among us !

The solution of this instructive history is simple. The union of church and state in Germany led to the legal establishment of Protestant creeds, and to the appointment and support of the Protestant clergy by the state. This led to the introduction of unregenerate men into the ministry, and also caused the erroneous and pernicious mode of theological education practised in the universities. This filled the professorial chairs and the pulpits with unregenerate men. This led to a dislike of the humbling and alarming truths of the evangelical systems ; and this, by a gradual descent, ended in infidelity.

Now, all who are in this second class of opposers of creeds are not actuated by fear of conviction of sin ; for they have been fully and deeply convinced of their sins by the Holy Ghost. They do not doubt or deny the eternal sanctions of God's law ; for they fully believe them, and see and feel their justice. They do not deny the Trinity, the proper and supreme divinity of Christ, his incarnation and atonement, the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of a supernatural regeneration by his divine power through the truth : but they think that these truths are better and more fully taught in the



Bible than anywhere else, and taught in such manner and proportion, as to sanctify the heart, whilst they illuminate the mind.

In this class I place you. Your sermons belong to none else but to one of this class. Your great end is to urge all to engage in the devotional study of the Bible, as the inspired Word of God. You declare :

“That the Bible, as God wrote it,—every man his own interpreter, responsible only to God,—is our rule, our only teacher; and that therein, for all truth to be inculcated, all error to be extirpated, all discipline to be enforced, all holiness to be attained, we, as a people and a pastor, do deem ourselves PERFECT, THOROUGHLY FURNISHED UNTO ALL GOOD WORKS.”

And this is but a true and faithful expansion of the fundamental idea of your text, that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” How happens it, then, that men who unhesitatingly deny that large portions of those very Scriptures, of which you thus speak, are given by inspiration of God, are yet so active in circulating your sermons?

The leading reason, as I have said, seems to be this: You make your charges against the whole Protestant Church, for its abuse of creeds, so indiscriminately, as to include all denominations in one and the same sweeping sentence of condemnation, though some stand on very different grounds from others. And our marvellously enlightened and candid friends of the “Christian World” seem to rejoice in so good an opportunity to smite their orthodox Congregational neighbors through you.

Let us then consider, what, according to you, is involved in the guilt of apostacy. “It is the substitution of any other creed than the Bible, to regulate the belief, experience and practice of the whole Christian world.” “But what is the substitution of any other creed? Not the publishing in book-form of a system of doctrines which any man, or body of men, suppose to be contained in the Bible. It is right to compare, to harmonize, to systematize; it is right to publish, to defend, to propagate.” “Nor is it the mere publication, defence and propagation of a book, by any man, or body of men, as containing THE system of doctrines taught in the Bible:” though you deem it unwise so to do.

What, then, is it? “It is, after having presumed to publish such a book, and to say, ‘this is THE system of doctrines contained in the word of God,’ to go further; and to require the acceptance



of that book by every candidate for licensure or ordination, as a test of his qualification." It is this which you affirm to be one step in apostacy; and this you charge on all Protestant Churches. But is this done by the orthodox Congregationalists of New England? I answer: No, by no means. True it is, that the Presbyterian Church in these United States does it; and as you received your theological education and licensure under her care, and not in New England, I do not wonder at your error. Others, even in New England, have made the same mistake; for we have our platform, and confessions of faith; and you might naturally think that we use them as does the Presbyterian Church. But we do not. We use them only in the manner approved by you. I was licensed in Connecticut, and have been once ordained and once installed in Massachusetts. Yet I never was required to receive or subscribe any book, or creed, or confession of faith of the Congregational body. I have aided in licensing, ordaining and installing many; and never knew it done. The Bible is, in theory and practice, our only *authoritative* creed.

Either, then, the New England Congregationalists are no part of the Protestant Church, or else you are mistaken in declaring the universal Protestant Church to be in a state of apostacy. A large and important portion is free from the charge. Of course you err when you say: "There is not one of these great evangelical denominations from which he, i.e. the candidate, can get license, unless he will subscribe the creed of that denomination." Of course you err when, on this ground, you say, "that liberty of opinion in our Theological Seminaries is a mere form;" and when you say that "it has come to pass that the ministry themselves dare not study their Bibles;" and also when you say "that the ministry of the evangelical Protestant denominations are not only formed all the way up, under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, and that they live, and move, and breathe in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing, at every hour, to every baser element of their nature, to hush up the truth, and bow the knee to the power of apostacy."

In all this, I doubt not, you are sincere; and yet let me assure you, that, so far as Congregational New England is concerned, it is altogether imaginary. We pledge our ministers to no book or creed but the Bible. There is real and all-sufficient liberty of opinion among the students of all our Theological Seminaries



And our ministers dare to study their Bibles fully and thoroughly, and are not tempted to bow the knee to the power of apostacy. I have no doubt that you will rejoice to have your error thus corrected, and to know that there is yet a land on earth, where, even on your own principles, apostacy has not invaded a leading portion of the church of God.

I have said that I do not wonder at your error on this point. I cannot say so much for those who have the oversight of the "Christian World." We do not suppose that they would knowingly endorse and circulate statements so manifestly erroneous. But surely their knowledge of the moral geography of the "Christian World," in New England, is even less accurate than their knowledge of the physical geography of the West, and with far less excuse. Ought they not to know what is before their eyes? Can they have forgotten that in the famous controversy between Prof. Norton and the "Christian Disciple," on one side, and the "Christian Spectator," on the other, in the year 1824, this very point was at issue, and came to a decision?

Listen to the following passage from the "Christian Spectator" in reply to a charge in the "Christian Disciple," that the orthodox New England Congregationalists are obliged to receive the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and the Saybrook Platform, as the public standards of their faith :

"It is true that these formularies are regarded by Calvinists in this country as containing a doctrinal system, which, whatever imperfections and errors may belong to it, is in its general features in accordance with the Scriptures. But we ask for the *proof* that there is any such *public profession* of the creed contained in these formularies, any such recognition of them as *standards of faith* by Calvinistic ministers and churches as the Reviewer asserts ; any which shows that the ministers and churches actually adopt as their *faith* every article of these formularies in its precise form of statement. We say that such is not the fact, and that it is notorious that it is not. There is no such subscription to these formularies by Calvinistic ministers or churches, no such use made of them, no such recognition of their authority in matters of faith in any form whatever, as will warrant the representation of the Reviewer. Decisive to the contrary, are the freedom of religious discussion, and the diversity of religious opinion among Calvinists, in regard to several points treated of in these formularies." Vol. vi. p. 372.

If, too, the explorers of "the Christian World" had been thorough in their researches, they might have found that not very



rare volume, called "Congregational Order," published by the General Association of Connecticut, in 1843; and containing the Cambridge Platform and the Saybrook Confession and Platform, and in it they might have read the following statement as to the authority of the creeds and other portions of the work:

"It is a book undertaken at the appointment, and crowned with the favorable acceptance, of the General Association of Connecticut. It proceeds from no legislative or judicial power. The General Association cannot prescribe to the churches, or to the ministry, either opinions to be maintained, or rules to be obeyed. Each church, each consociation of churches, each association of pastors, acts for itself in its own sphere, and will continue to do so hereafter." Page v.

These statements are enough to repel the blow aimed at us by the "Christian World," through your sermons. So far as this end is concerned, I might stop here.

But though I fully sympathize with you in your desire to exalt the Bible as the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice, yet you have said some things which seem to me not adapted to secure this end; but which tend to show that the Bible is so imperfect, that it cannot thoroughly furnish the man of God to every good work. Though I agree with you, that creeds may be, and have been, so abused as to result in apostacy, still I think more highly of their importance, usefulness and necessity, than you seem to do. I regard all intelligent and efficient organic Christian action as impossible without them. And the abuse of these instruments should never lead us to undervalue their legitimate use.

I shall therefore make some remarks upon the proper use and the indispensable necessity of creeds; and then look at the various uses which are in fact made of them by the Protestant world, and inquire how far these uses are deserving of censure as leading to apostacy from the word of God.

In doing this, I shall take the word of God as my standard: and if I succeed in showing that to make and to use creeds, in a right way of course, are very important "good works," then it will follow that the man of God is as thoroughly furnished by the Bible for these, as for any other good works. In this manner, by a fraternal and Christian comparison of views, I trust we shall both be guided into all truth.

I am your affectionate brother, EDWARD BEECHER.



## THE CAVE OF PREDESTINATION.

TRAVELLERS often speak of the striking contrast felt in passing out of the crowded, bustling, noisy streets, into some grand old cathedral. In an instant, you exchange the glare and clamor of day for the deep quiet of the long-drawn aisles, "dim with religious light," streaming from the pictured windows, on the stony forest of Gothic pillars with their branching arches, amid whose sacred gloom the visitant is "chilled with religious awe."

It is somewhat thus with the weary pilgrim through life's dusty streets, stunned with the din of earthly cares, overwhelmed with the burden of grief, and driven by the tempest of his sorrows, when he turns for refuge to the great doctrine of the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men. It is like passing, at one step, from a scene of agitation, crazing the mind with doubts and fears, into some vast and solemn cave, amid whose silence, awful and profound, the tumult of the soul is hushed, and the troubled thoughts subside to rest. The lamp of revelation, shining here as in a dark place, discloses the caverned roof, fretted with snowy stalactites, wreathed into a thousand shapes of grace and beauty, gleaming with the play of the flickering flame, and seeming to tremble into motion. All that is seen is immense and fair; but the limits of vision fade away into recesses unexplored, and depths which cannot be sounded. The flow of the still waters is faintly heard amid the distant roar of rivers, which run

"Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to a sunless sea."

There may be a painful feeling of the littleness of man, an oppressive sense of the vast and the unknown, an overpowering consciousness of the presence of God in a temple all his own, as not made by mortal hands. But, under the atmosphere of these emotions, the uproar of the mind is subdued and quieted, the stormy passions of grief and terror sink to repose, and a heavenly calm pervades the breast.

The doctrine of the eternal purposes of God, governing all things and all events with infinite wisdom, power and love, is a sanctuary of retreat to the afflicted child of God. Retiring in silent meditation to this sublime hiding-place, the weary and



heavy-laden soul, bowed down with trouble, and sinking under the storm of adversity, finds shelter and relief. Here, though it can only see and know in part, and much remains that is dark and inscrutable, it can distinctly discern the glorious truth, that all its afflictions and trials are ordained of God, for holy and beneficent ends. The ear awakens, amid these tranquil recesses, to the voice of the divine perfections, making, like the spheres, "music too vast and constant to be heard" amid the distractions of the world. Here we feel, at last, that all those discords were but "harmony not understood," though sweetly modulated by an all-surpassing skill. Then only can we be reconciled to our bereavements, and learn to rejoice in our heavy crosses, and to glory in tribulations and infirmities, when we feel that they were eternally decreed by unerring and unchanging love.

An aged patriarch of the Connecticut churches was, many years since, called to bury the partner of his life, whom he had long and tenderly loved. A very consoling discourse was preached at the funeral, from the pathetic exclamation: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me." When the services were closed, the venerable mourner thanked his brother for his kind and sympathizing words; "but," said he, "the only foundation on which my soul can rest for consolation in this season of distress, is in that blessed speech of the Psalmist: 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.' " The sovereignty of God is the "Mammoth Cave," where the soul which is persecuted by the shafts of the "insatiate archer" and the venomous arrows of misfortune, may "dwell deep" and lie down secure.

"The Man of sorrows," acquainted, as he was, with every grief we know, and incomparably more, had few seasons of gladness to cheer his sad and straitened life. Of one of these we read, at a time when he was speaking of the distinguishing grace of God, in making known the doctrines of salvation to whom he would: "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth! that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Whoso feels like Jesus, and has the same mind that was in him, will feel as Jesus did in view of this consoling truth. The break-



ing billows may dash over his soul in long succession, while "deep calleth unto deep" to make his afflictions more profound. But happy is he, if he still cling trustingly to that mighty God who holdeth all these waves in the hollow of his hand. Such a spirit may sing, from the depth of its sorrows: "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever."

Let mourners retire, like the fugitive prophet, to the caverned sides of the Mount of God, till they feel that "the indignation is overpast," and the still small voice of love and mercy has spoken peace to their hearts, and calmed their minds, and bidden them to be of good cheer. Then let them go forth to a new mission of duty, and return to the work of salvation with renovated strength and confidence. Well knowing who it is that worketh in them to will and to do, they will "strive according to his working, which worketh in them mightily."

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### PRESIDENT QUINCY'S MISSTATEMENTS EXPOSED AND CORRECTED.

#### NO. II.

It is further objected to Dr. Mather, that he was, to a ridiculous extent, the dupe of impressions which he sometimes received in prayer, and which he deemed of an almost supernatural character. The impression of this kind which has been chiefly dwelt upon, and in the issue of which he was disappointed, was one which he cherished from about the year 1693 to the end of the century. It was often impressed on him during this period, as it also was upon his son, that "God would return him to England, and there give him an opportunity, in some way, greatly to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ." He seems to have desired such an event; and, in several instances, the way was almost opened for the accomplishment of his wishes. But, from various causes, he was disappointed. President Quincy regards these impressions as so utterly unreasonable and enthusiastical, that he makes them matter of ridicule and reproach. He talks about their "genuflexions, and prostrations, and supernatural spiritual elevations," and "glorious heart-melting persuasions," in a manner highly



offensive both to piety and taste ; and resolves the whole, so far as concerns Increase Mather, into "the natural wishes of his own heart ;" — "the natural cravings of an *ambitious spirit*." Vol. i. pp. 81-109.

On this subject we remark, that the opinions of our fathers, in respect to various matters, natural and spiritual, were so different from ours, that, if we take them from among their contemporaries and judge of them by our own standards, it is not difficult to make them appear ridiculous. For example : if all that the apostolic Eliot said and wrote, as to the abomination of wearing wigs and long hair, were to be collected together, how easy it would be to turn him into merriment ! Or, if Governor Winthrop's account of the terrible judgment which befell Mrs. Dyer, in consequence of her having adopted the errors of Mrs. Hutchinson, were copied out, and held up to the gaze and the disgust of modern eyes, not only the excellent Governor, but some of his contemporaries, might be made to appear ridiculous enough. But would such a procedure be fair or generous ? And is there any more propriety in ransacking the *diaries* of the Mathers, (for it is their diaries which have furnished the grounds of the objection now before us,) in search of materials for derision and reproach, and especially for turning into sarcasm their more secret and solemn acts of devotion ?

The occasion requires, perhaps, that a few words be offered on the general subject of *impressions in prayer*. We dissent from much that has been written in our times, in respect to what has been called "the prayer of faith," as being not only unscriptural, but of dangerous tendency. Still, we believe that there is such a thing as sensible, intimate, heart-melting communion with God in prayer ; such as the venerable Mather sometimes enjoyed, when he prostrated himself in secret before God, and wet his study floor with tears. We believe, too, that Christians who abound in prayer have sometimes such remarkable *assistance* in their supplications, that they can hardly resist the conclusion, when they rise from the duty, that the things prayed for will be bestowed. They reason thus : "God would not have so assisted me, in praying for this or that event, if he had not intended to hear the prayer and grant the request." There is nothing enthusiastical or unreasonable in believing in the efficacy of prayer. We go further and say, in regard to this matter, that if holy,



spiritual persons, while engaged in their devotions, should think that they received remarkable impressions from God, in respect to certain coming events, they ought not to be ridiculed. Who shall say that the thing is impossible? "There are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in some men's philosophy." Some intelligent and excellent Christians have supposed themselves the subjects of such impressions; and the things of which they believed themselves premonished have, in some instances, come to pass. At the same time, we must remember, that even the best Christians are liable to be deceived, in regard to impressions of this nature; and, consequently, it becomes them to say little about them, and especially not to suffer their *duties*, their *conduct*, to be too much influenced by them.

With this general expression of opinion as to the subject in hand, let us return to the case of the Mathers. We class them together, because both were alike concerned in this matter.

They were eminently persons of prayer. They observed more private fasts and vigils, and spent far more time in their secret devotions, than was common with Christians in their own age, or than is common now. There was, if we may judge from their private writings, a spirit and fervor in their devotions, which has been rarely equalled in this world of sin.

These men believed not only in the duty, but the *efficacy* of prayer. They *expected* answers to their prayers. Not unfrequently they had strong persuasions, amounting almost to an assurance, that their supplications for particular favors would be answered. In a few cases they received *impressions* in prayer, that certain events in Providence were about to take place. And in several instances these events did take place. Men may account for such dispensations as they will: of the fact of their occurrence there can be no reasonable doubt.\* Still Dr. Mather was liable to be deceived by his impressions; and, in regard to his anticipated return to England, it seems that he was deceived. But is he, on this account, justly exposed to ridicule or reproach?

\* In November, 1676, Dr. Mather "had a strange impression" that Boston was about to be visited with a destructive fire. He preached on the subject, and warned the people of it, two Sabbaths in succession. On the night following the second Sabbath, the fire broke out; his meeting-house was laid in ashes, and "whole streets were consumed in the devouring flames."



This particular impression seems to have exerted no *bad* influence on his conduct. He might have returned to England in several instances, if he had been so disposed. The Corporation of College repeatedly desired him to go on an agency for them ; and in one instance, "the Representatives and the Governor voted a concurrence." Vol. i. p. 477. At a later period, "the ministers of the Province unanimously desired him to take a voyage to England, with a complimentary address from them," on the accession of George I., and "made provision for the expenses of the journey." But in neither of these cases did the way seem to him to be open. His duty was not plain ; and, until it was plain, his "impression" could not induce him to go. His language was, "Lord, if it will be more to *thy glory* that I should go to England than for me to continue here in this land, then let me go ; otherwise not." "The Lord overrule this affair to his own glory, and so as that I may see his holy hand pointing me what I should do." Here, surely, is an unqualified submission to the will and the glory of God ; a feeling as unlike as possible to the "natural cravings of an ambitious spirit."

In treating of the life of Dr. Mather, President Quincy charges him, almost uniformly, with being influenced by *worldly, selfish, ambitious motives*. And he thinks himself fully entitled to do so, because, in consequence of having access to his diary, he *knows* the motives by which he was influenced. "Of the *motives* and *master passions* of his (Mather's) eventful presidency, we are enabled to speak with *great certainty*." "President Mather and his son both kept *diaries*, in which they have themselves recorded their *motives* and *purposes* ; so that, in relation to either, there can hardly be any mistake." Vol. i. p. 56.

In regard to this sort of evidence, of which President Quincy has made so much use, we must offer a few remarks. And first : Is it fair and honorable to bring out, in this way, the diaries of distinguished men ? These diaries were written, either for the writer's own private benefit, or at most for the inspection of personal and family friends. Is it right, then, to drag them out before the public, and turn them to a use for which they never were designed ? Most men *say* things at their own firesides, and in presence of their families, which they would not wish to have published to the world. And if some impertinent eaves-dropper were to make these things public, there are few persons who



would not think it a gross injury. We know not that President Quincy keeps a diary; but doubtless he is in the habit of writing confidential letters to his friends. And in this correspondence he may have written as few things unsuitable for the public eye, as any other individual. But would *he* be willing that, a hundred years hence, his private letters should be ransacked, and the more objectionable parts spread out to common view? Would *he* be willing that his successors in office should treat him as he has treated a venerable predecessor, by resting his reputation on the result of such disclosures?

Many distinguished clergymen and laymen, in the days of the Mathers, were in the habit of keeping diaries, in which they recorded their private thoughts, their spiritual affairs, and the more important incidents of their lives. But would it be right for their successors or descendants, into whose hands these documents may have fallen, to exhibit them before the world? As well might they strip their venerable ancestors of their wigs and doublets, and send them into the streets in shirts and night-caps.

Besides, the diaries of evangelical Christians are not unfrequently misunderstood, especially by those who have no sympathy with their religious emotions. Pious men, in their closets, record the sense they feel of their many imperfections, of their great sinfulness in the sight of God; and persons who have less conscience of sin than they, and less sorrow for it, infer from the record either that they were gross hypocrites, or that they had been secretly guilty of abominable crimes. Thus Boswell, finding such intimations in Johnson's diary, supposed, from the depth of his self-abasement, that he must have been secretly a very wicked man. And Mr. Bancroft infers, from Cotton Mather's account of his temptations and repentings, that his conscience distressed him for the part he had taken against the witches. There was a man who bitterly hated what he termed "the Evangelicals," and, because he had little else to allege against them, he used to appeal, for evidence, to their prayers: "Go and hear the wretches pray. We need no further evidence of their hypocrisy and guilt. They confess themselves to be miserable sinners!" There was about as much sense and justice in this kind of reasoning, as in the conclusions which are sometimes drawn, either ignorantly or maliciously, from the humble confessions in the diaries of devout men. Because Job "abhorred himself,



and repented in dust and ashes," and Isaiah confessed himself to be a "man of unclean lips," and Paul groaned habitually under a burthen of sin, is it to be inferred that these inspired men were hypocrites, living in the indulgence of palpable wickedness?

But we have not yet done with this species of evidence from diaries. What is this testimony? It is not that of an individual under oath. Neither is it the word of one who is writing a history for posterity, and recording what he has thoroughly inquired into and knows to be fact. In the language of the North American Review: "The writer of a diary puts down his *present impressions*, which may be materially defective and erroneous, for want of the explanations which a little more time may bring. Where friendships or dislikes are concerned, or questions of conduct are at issue, he makes his record under the influence of feelings which may bias him from the juster conclusions of a cooler hour. At all events, if his testimony remains to be produced, when he and they whom it may harm are no more, it is simply the testimony of a witness who cannot be cross-examined against one accused, who cannot speak for himself; a kind of evidence which *no acknowledged principle or process of justice approves.*"\* In proof of the justness of these remarks, it may be observed, that the diaries quoted by President Quincy not unfrequently contradict one another. Mather contradicts Sewall; and Sewall, Leverett; and Leverett, one, if not both, the others. They all give their honest impressions at the time; but these impressions do not always coincide, and are to be received with much caution and allowance.

Under the shelter of Mather's diary, President Quincy proceeds to accuse his venerable predecessor of acting from *selfish, base, ambitious motives*, in most of the important transactions of his life. Take the following instances as examples: Mr. Mather is said to have recanted his first thoughts respecting the half-way covenant, because "the side he had embraced proved to be neither *popular nor prevailing.*" He changed his mind on the subject of toleration, for *the same reason*. It was "love of *distinction*," in part, which led him to oppose the usurpations of Andros. Vol. i. pp. 119-121. Again, when the new charter of government had gone into operation, and "the Calvinistic lead-

\* For 1841, p. 358.



ers of the Province," — which "Increase and Cotton Mather *aspired* to become," — "began to realize that the sceptre they had so long possessed had passed from their hands," they "sought to possess themselves of *such instruments of power as were yet within their grasp*;" and this was the secret of their strong attachment to the College. pp. 65, 66. And when the charter, — which President Mather had exerted himself to push through the Provincial Legislature, and under which the corporation had acted long enough "to *gratify* him with a doctorate," — was negatived by the king, President Quincy thinks it likely that Mather was *glad of it*; "as the affairs of the College were thrown into a state of inexplicable embarrassment," and "the sense of *the importance of his experience and services was greatly augmented*." p. 71. His opposition to the founders of the Brattle Street Church was the result of an "excited *temper*" and "wounded *pride*," and a desire to retain "his *popularity* with the prevailing sect." p. 133. He was compelled, however, for prudential reasons, so far "to *smother* his resentments, as to take part in the religious services at the dedication of the church." p. 135.

Such is a specimen of the manner in which President Quincy goes on, through more than a hundred pages, imputing the basest motives to Dr. Mather, and representing him as a vile hypocrite, who cares nothing for college, church, or country; whose only concern is, so to conduct affairs that his own private ends may be answered, his own wrongs avenged, and the sense of his own personal importance and influence augmented. President Quincy feels fully authorized to make such representations, because he has had sight of Mather's diary, and is "able to speak with *certainty* as to the *motives* and *master-passions* of his eventful presidency."

But where is the evidence, from the diary, that such *were* his "motives and master-passions?" Does Mather confess as much as this? Does he record it in his diary? As President Quincy has been pleased to appeal to the diary, we may insist that he should abide by it. Where, then, is the evidence from the diary, that Dr. Mather really was actuated by the motives which are here imputed to him? Has President Quincy produced any such evidence? *No where*. Can he produce any? If so, then let him do it.

The imputations of President Quincy as to the motives of his



predecessor, so far from being justified by the diary, are in repeated instances directly *contradicted* by it. For example: Dr. Mather, in his diary, continually assigns it as his motive, and his only motive, for desiring to return to England, that he might there have an opportunity to glorify God, and serve the cause and kingdom of Christ. But President Quincy can see nothing here but "the natural cravings of an ambitious spirit." Again: Dr. Mather, in his diary, repeatedly and with the utmost apparent sincerity, expresses the determination to resign his office in connection with the College. He did this in 1695, and was prevented from carrying his determination into effect, only by the earnest remonstrances of the corporation against it. He did the same, in three several instances, in 1697. Under date of August 7th, he says in his diary: "I am determined to resign my relation to the College the next week, having desired a corporation meeting for that end." "September 3d. My discouragements are such, that I am fully purposed to resign the presidentship." "September 15th. At College, to attend a corporation meeting, when I intended to resign the presidentship; but, it being a stormy day, there wanted one to make a sufficient number for a meeting." Yet President Quincy persists in insinuating, if not asserting, that "these threats of resigning were intended only for effect, and that there was no sincerity in them." p. 96. Our charge here is, — and it is a heavy, an unanswerable charge, — that, having appealed to the diary as the grand source of evidence by which to decide upon the motives of his predecessor, President Quincy persists in imputing to him unworthy and selfish motives, not only without the evidence of the diary, but in *direct contradiction to it*. He will appeal to the diary, so long as any thing is recorded which, being distorted, perverted and judged of by our modern standards, can be turned into matter of invective; but, when the diary assumes another character, it can be readily dispensed with or directly contradicted.

I only remark further, in reference to President Quincy's treatment of Dr. Mather, that he represents him frequently, if not generally, as being actuated by a *wrong spirit*, as a *disturber* of the churches, as being rather a *bad* than a good man. Both to him and his son, "controversy was not so much an incident as an *element* of their natures." Their "theological zeal was always at the boiling point." Their controversy with the innova-



tors of the times was conducted "neither with *temper* nor policy." pp. 132, 137. "Violent doctrinal dissensions were by them excited and perpetuated" in the churches, through a long course of years. p. 349. Of Increase Mather himself it is said, that, in his controversy respecting church order, "he lost all *patience* and *self-possession*," and "was led to the exhibition of *great violence* and *personality*." pp. 133, 139. In a word, the character of Dr. Mather is summed up by our historian, in the following terms: He "was *restless, obtrusive, excitable, boastful* of his public services, and *complaining* of neglect and ingratitude." His whole life "had been *one series of theological and political controversy*." He "was a partisan by profession; always harnessed and ready, and restless for the onset: now courting the statesmen; now mingling with the multitude; exciting the clergy in the synod, the congregation in the pulpit, and the people in the halls of the popular assembly." p. 147.

Of wholesale charges such as these, it would be useless to go into a particular examination. The most of them, it is well known, are false and slanderous; and the author of them,—so long as they are permitted to stand unretracted,—can in no way escape the imputation of being a *libeller* of the holy dead. Increase Mather's whole life "one series of theological and political *controversy*!" And yet, of his ninety-three or ninety-four publications, at least *eighty* are of a *decidedly practical character*! Increase Mather a *disturber* of the New England churches and clergy! And yet Dr. Eliot describes him as "the *father* of the New England clergy, whose name and character were held in *veneration*, not only by those who knew him, but by succeeding generations." And Mr. Grahame, in his valuable history of the United States, speaks of him as "the most eminent theologian, and the most pious and popular minister, of Massachusetts." Vol. i.; pp. 262, 279. It was this same slandered Increase Mather, who (to use the language of the General Court,) by "unwearied, indefatigable labor and service, voluntarily undertaken for the good of his country, and attended with much difficulty and hazard to his person," saved Massachusetts from revolution and bloodshed, and gave to her a charter of government, under which she prospered for almost a century. This too, is the man, (and with some, this is his great and inextinguishable crime,) who, by his resistance to unscriptural and alarming innovations, long kept the tide of spiritual



desolation from rolling over the churches of the Pilgrims, and greatly restricted its ravages when, at length, it came; — the man to whom New England is more indebted, ecclesiastically and civilly, than to any other individual who ever lived in it; who, when he died, was “honored with a greater funeral than had ever been seen in these parts of the world;” and in consequence of whose death, “the pulpits, throughout the country, rang with mingled eulogies and funeral lamentations.” \*

One of the most painful effects of President Quincy’s revilings is the impression which they left on the mind of the late learned and estimable Mr. Grahame, author of the History of the United States. Though not a Puritan by descent, Mr. G. was evidently one in feeling. He was a Calvinist of the Scottish church, and seems to have been a truly pious man. He had a strong sympathy with the early settlers of New England, and in his History had spoken in the most favorable terms of the Mathers. But, after reading President Quincy, he hardly knew what to say or to think. We find the following passage in his Journal: “He (President Quincy) wounds my prejudices by attacking the Mathers, and other persons of a primitive cast of Puritanism, with a severity the more painful to me, that I see not well how I can demur to its justice.” (Memoir, p. 24.) And in a Note, in the last edition of his History, Mr. G. says: “From President Quincy’s History of Harvard University, it appears to me, much more clearly than agreeably, that, in the instance of Cotton Mather, as well as of his father, a strong and acute understanding, though united with real piety, was sometimes corrupted by a deep vein of passionate vanity and absurdity.” Vol. i., p. 289. Had Mr. Grahame lived long enough to learn the real character of President Quincy’s History, and the little credit which is due to it, more especially on points which conflict with his religious prejudices, his good opinion of the Mathers would not have been at all affected by such an authority.

But we leave the venerated Increase Mather to his rest. It will not be disturbed, nor will his reputation permanently suffer by any attempts, at this late day, to tarnish and reproach it. The shafts of his revilers will recoil and fasten on themselves, rather than fall with lasting injury on him.

\* Remarkables, &c., p. 211.



## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

IN the last number of the "New Englander" is an article by Rev. Horace Bushnell, Hartford, Ct., on the Evangelical Alliance. It is well written, bold and manly. The spirit of the article is good, and its principles are of vast importance. They are, for the most part, correct; and if the Alliance had acted upon them, or some of a kindred character, it would have accomplished much more than there is any reason to think it has now accomplished. By this, however, we would by no means be understood to say that it has accomplished no good. If it has done no more, it has demonstrated the wide-spread sentiment among Christians of the necessity of more concentrated action. It was a development of a deep under-current of feeling, or, perhaps, we should say, an *over* current, among all lovers of the truth, far above the low grounds of denominational distinctions. Protestant Christendom has never felt so generally the need of an outlet for its common sympathies,—never, perhaps, has the conviction been so general and deep, that it is quite time for the adherents of a common faith to cease contending with one another, and unite in combat against a common foe. But it is apparent that the London Alliance has failed to develop the great idea which the Christian world is laboring to bring forth; and for the reason suggested in the article alluded to, that its basis proposed nothing to *be done*.

The feeling or sentiment, however, which the Alliance attempted to evolve, is still in existence, and unsatisfied. It has not yet found vent. It is hampered by handcuffs and fetters. What is wanted, is religious liberty;—a liberty as heaven-wide from licentiousness or jacobinism as it is from despotism. Religious liberty is yet a principle to be fully understood and practically applied. This is distinctly and forcibly maintained by the article of Dr. B. The Bible also he most correctly recognizes, as the foundation of the principle, and the only instrument to be depended on for its final realization. We most heartily coincide with the able writer upon these points. And it is with diffidence that we dissent from him in any respect. We must, however, make it a question, whether the application of the principles which he advocates, or rather the manner of their application, is entirely unobjectionable. He is evidently a strong friend of the American "*Christian Alliance*," which, as he



thinks, has got nearer to the great desideratum, than the world's "*Evangelical Alliance*." He thinks that the "Christian Alliance," which aims at the spread of Protestantism in Italy, is common ground, upon which all who really sigh for religious liberty may unite in doing something; and, in doing so, find a spirit of union secured and cherished, as a matter of course, by which the strong-holds of spiritual despotism will be made to tumble and fall. Admit it. Now the question arises, is it the most expeditious mode of securing the object to make an attack upon the grand citadel of Rome as the head quarters of spiritual thralldom? That is, no doubt, a strong citadel,—the very Gibraltar of the tyrant. But, after all, is there any propriety in considering Rome as *the head quarters* of spiritual despotism? Is it not rather a principle indigenous in the human heart? Can a principle of human nature be said to have locality? Is it certain that it is more strongly developed at Rome than elsewhere? Is not Rome *all over the world*? Is she not in the United States? Is she not in Worcester?—in Cincinnati?—in St. Louis? And, if so, may it not be well for the American branch of the Alliance to propose, in the first place, to take some of these redoubts, before it makes an attack upon the main citadel?

Then, again, is there not another system as spiritually as it is civilly despotic in the United States, which effectually deprives millions of the great charter of religious liberty? How much worse is Romanism, in this respect, than the "*peculiar institution*" of the South? It is granted that Dr. B. recognizes the claims of the slaves of the South, as well as of the followers of the Pope. But in carrying out his principles, in order to secure liberty for the slaves to worship God, it would seem that we must go round through Rome. Are we mistaken? Our question is, Whether we could not actually reach Rome quicker and more effectually through Baltimore, Washington, Charlestown and New Orleans? Is there not such a thing as failing to accomplish our object, not by undertaking too much, but by beginning at the wrong place? At least, if we begin at the wrong end, shall we not labor to great disadvantage? If we go to Rome, without first setting our machinery at work here, at home, could not the Pope, with very good grace, say: "Physicians, heal yourselves! go home: go home, and disenthral your own oppressed victims! Cease to accuse me as withholding the Bible from my vassals, till you have first given



it to your own!" Do we not strike at Rome as effectually by demanding an investigation of the college of the Holy Cross in Worcester, as by thundering at the doors of the Vatican itself? Will not the principle of spiritual despotism be as strongly rebuked, by demanding the Bible for the slaves of the South, as for the lazzaroni of Italy? Would not Rome look on our efforts with more charity, should our first and hardest blows be dealt at home? Would not our attack upon despotism seem more honest and sincere, and not as the result of prejudice against Rome? By undermining spiritual despotism, first at home, then abroad, Rome must of course fall.

In these observations, we wish to be distinctly understood as not meaning to undervalue the great objects of the "Christian Alliance," or as intimating that those Christians engaged in it are not just as much interested in any other judicious and feasible plan for the overthrow of spiritual despotism in any other direction. What we aim at is, that those who are really, honestly and faithfully at work, for the overthrow of oppression everywhere, should see eye to eye, and cordially coöperate. All such should feel and act together. Let them do it. The times demand it. For, in the language of Dr. B., "A general reformation must ensue; and truth, liberated at last, must come forth to reign."

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### THE BIBLE, THE WORD OF GOD.

We have been forcibly impressed of late, with the characteristic name applied by John to that symbolical shape which rose out of the sand of the sea. On its seven heads was the name of BLASPHEMY. Much evil speaking against the word of God is now heard from men bearing the name of Christian ministers. A denomination which applies to its faith the designation, "pure Christianity," is the source of this injurious influence. Ministers are permitted to retain their standing in that denomination, while they speak against the word of God in bold unqualified terms, taking from it all its divine authority.

This is no new thing with Unitarians. It may be useful to show, from their standard writers, that low and unworthy views of the Bible are characteristic of Unitarianism, if the standard



writers of a denomination can properly be regarded as indicating its views.

We shall here present extracts from some distinguished Unitarian authorities, to show that Unitarian writers, generally, agree in degrading representations of the Bible. These extracts are taken from a numerous collection, of the same general character, printed, with full references to the books and pages where they are to be found, and entitled "Exhibition of Unitarianism in 1830." Our first quotations are from the celebrated Dr. Priestley :

"The writers of the books of Scripture were men, and therefore fallible."—"I have shown that the Apostle Paul often reasons inconclusively, and therefore that he wrote as any other person of his turn of mind and thinking, and in his situation, would have written, without any particular inspiration."—"The Scriptures were written without any particular inspiration, by men who wrote according to the best of their knowledge."—"That the books of Scripture were written by a particular divine inspiration, is a thing to which the writers themselves make no pretensions. It is a notion destitute of all proof, and that has done great injury to the evidence of Christianity."

The next quotation is from Mr. Belsham :

"The Scriptures themselves contain a very faithful and credible account of the Scripture doctrine, which is the true word of God ; but they are not themselves the word of God, nor do they ever assume that title, and it is highly improper to speak of them as such, as it leads inattentive readers to suppose that they were written under a plenary inspiration, to which they make no pretensions."

In the Memoirs of Gilbert Wakefield, a distinguished English Unitarian, he represents his own sentiments in these terms :

"It has always been deemed by me a reasonable postulatam, that some qualifications and softenings in the case of many relations and occurrences in the Bible history may be very properly applied, without any danger to the main fabric of revelation, upon the ground of exaggeration from national vanity, and the pride of individuals."—"I believe no more than Thomas Paine, that the sun and moon, either in the apparent or philosophical acceptation of the phrase, actually stood still on this occasion at the command of Joshua."

A Unitarian periodical published in Scotland, the "Christian Pioneer," says :

"The idea of the evangelists being inspired writers, is quite inconsistent with what Luke says, i. 3. 'It seemed good to me also,



having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, O most excellent Theophilus.'"—"Mark's authority as a writer is just equivalent to that of a short-hand writer or reporter of modern times."

The following extracts are from European works which have been published and recommended by Unitarians in America. The first is from "The Improved Version of the New Testament:"

"The account of the miraculous conception of Jesus was probably the fiction of some early Gentile convert, who hoped, by elevating the dignity of the founder, to abate the popular prejudice against the sect."

Le Clerc, another writer approved by Unitarians, and an edition of whose works was put forth by Professor Norton, of Harvard College, says:

"It is very plain, that the historians of Scripture were not inspired, by the contradictions in several circumstances of their histories."—"An inspiration is attributed to the apostles, to which they never pretended, and whereof there is not the least mark left in their writings."

We come now to American Unitarian writers. In a printed Sermon, by Dr. Ware, the elder, preached at the ordination of Rev. A. Lamson, Dedham, we read:

"We must distinguish between the doctrines delivered by the apostles and primitive teachers, and the arguments, illustrations, and topics of persuasion, which they employ to enforce them. The former we are to consider as given by inspiration; the latter were the suggestions of their own minds, in the exercise of their respective talents, and the kinds and degrees of knowledge they possessed."

We quote next from the "Christian Examiner," the leading Unitarian periodical in this country:

"The Scriptures were prepared for temporary use, and filled with subjects of local interest or popular accommodation, the perished peculiarities of a former race."—"There was a time in the dark ages, and afterwards, when it was maintained, we cannot say believed, for the proposition does not admit of being believed, that the whole Bible, including the historical books of the Old Testament, was a revelation."

The following strictures upon the Old Testament and the Mosaic economy, appointed, as the church of God has always



believed, by God himself, are taken from a once popular Unitarian work, entitled "The First Settlers of New England :"

"The sanguinary institutions of the Jews, from which we have derived our crude and unworthy notions respecting the Deity, can have no connection with the pure and heavenly religion of Jesus."

This last passage, — and many which might be quoted from the writings of Norton, Palfrey and Parker, — illustrate the feelings of the writers with regard to the Old Testament, to which they all seem to have a peculiar dislike. The following is an extract of a letter from Professor Norton to Rev. Joseph Blanco White, dated Cambridge, (N. E.,) July 12, 1846 : \*

"You ascribe the evils which oppress Christianity to what you call by a happy term, *Bibliolatry*. I was struck by the coincidence of this, with what was expressed to me, long ago, by a highly respectable gentleman, formerly minister to this country from Holland, (Mr. Van Polanin,) who from an unbeliever, had, through the exercise of his own mind, become a rational Christian. He told me that he thought the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible was the support of all errors concerning Christianity. It is remarkable how little clearness of conception we find on the subject, and how often the Bible and religion are confounded together, by those who should know better. For myself, in regard to the Old Testament, though I believe the divine origin of the Mosaic dispensation, I regard the Pentateuch as a book full of fables, *compiled* after the captivity, and the other historical books as having no more claim to be divinely inspired, than the histories of Eusebius and his successors. In the prophecies, as they are called, there are noble conceptions of religion and duty (considering the times when they were written); but I do not believe that their authors claimed a miraculous power of predicting future events, or were supposed by their contemporaries to possess it. When we come to the New Testament, I put the highest value upon the Gospels, as an authentic record of the ministry of Jesus, and regard with strong interest the epistles of Paul, as exhibiting, in the most striking manner, the workings of a powerful and admirable mind, under an all pervading conviction of the truth of Christianity. But I ascribe the authorship of neither the Gospels nor Epistles to God, and cannot call them in any sense the Word of God."

The thought will strike every serious reader, that there is a great contrast between the feelings of these Unitarian writers, and those of the Apostles, with regard to the Old Testament. These writers say, that the Old Testament is a book of sanguin-

\* Life of Rev. Joseph Blanco White, written by Himself, with Portions of his Correspondence. London, 1845. Vol. ii. p. 250.



ary institutions, which can have no connection with the religion of Jesus. But one of the apostles, writing to a young christian minister, tells him how much satisfaction and gratitude he feels on his account, that from a child he had "known the Holy Scriptures, *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.*" "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" The Apostle Paul has a different opinion of the Old Testament, as a standard work for students in divinity, from some who have been professors of divinity and sacred literature in the Theological School at Cambridge. To many who have been graduated there, the apostle could not express the like gratulation that the Old Testament had exerted the same influence on them as on young Timothy.

It appears from the preceding extracts, that a rejection of the Old Testament as unworthy of the New, and a rejection of the New as inspired in its contents, or superintended in the manner of its composition, is perfectly consistent with being a Unitarian. That system of faith permits men who thus write and preach, to remain its accredited ministers. If we were to read several promiscuous sentences respecting the Bible, of opposite import, some, derogatory to the inspired character of the Scriptures, and the others acknowledging its sacred origin, we should be at no loss to know which were written by an Orthodox hand, and which by a Unitarian. Let us make the experiment. "Some qualifications and softenings, in the case of many relations and occurrences in the Bible history, may be very properly applied, on the ground of exaggeration, from national vanity and the pride of individuals."—"The Scriptures have God for their author, salvation for their end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for their matter."—"I have had frequent occasion to remark on the injury done to Christianity, by the pernicious practice of associating with it the historical transactions and institutions of the Jews."—"It is incredible to any one, who has not made the experiment, what a proficiency may be made in that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation, by comparing the parallel texts of the Old and New Testaments, and studying the Scriptures in this manner."—"The parenthesis, 'I speak as a man,' is very often to be understood, with the sacred writers, especially in those parts which do not profess to



be a revelation." — "We appeal to the infidel himself, whether he does not approach the Bible with awe, read it with fear, and close it with a painful conviction of its divine authority."

Some Unitarian ministers, in preaching to a promiscuous audience, feel it necessary to disavow such sentiments as we have quoted from their principal writers. This necessity no Orthodox preacher was ever known to feel. Who ever heard an Orthodox preacher protest, "I love the Bible!" "I reverence the Word of God!" "We cannot spare the Old Testament?" His hearers would half suspect, on hearing such words, that he was becoming "liberal," and would wonder what had created the necessity of protesting that he loved and honored the Book of God.

We now submit a few miscellaneous considerations in favor of the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

Here is a book, written at various times, during a period of sixteen hundred years, by men of every variety of tastes, talents and occupations. Yet it is one in its purpose and influence; the several parts of it confirm each other, and some fulfil the rest. It is great credulity to believe that there was no guiding, superintending influence from God, directing the composition of the different parts of this book; or that men, without any more divine direction than Cicero,\* scattered these writings abroad, which yet were so connected in their design that they could be collected into one volume without discordance or contradiction in their facts, or discrepancies in moral and religious opinions. We might as well say that the parts of an organ were made at different times, during a space of sixteen hundred years, by men who had no idea of a complete organ, but worked at random; one making some pipes, others the keys, and one the bellows, and another the stops; and that these parts, when brought together, were found to be fitted to each other, the keys all level, the pipes proportioned, the stops exactly right; so that, when the instrument was played, it was in tune, and has been so ever since.

Here is a book written, in part, by herdmen and fishermen; the portions which they wrote, as well as those written by kings and prophets, having a style which is found in no other writings. There is something in the language of the Bible which affects

\* See the Christian Examiner, vol. vii., pp. 347-357.



every mind, unlike any other language. Let a secular orator quote an appropriate passage of Scripture ; what force it gives to his remarks ! how different its effect from that of his own language, even though he be the most eloquent of men ! The singular condensation in the language of the Bible, makes it unlike any other writings in any age of the world. As an illustration, compare the pretended book of Solomon, in the Apocrypha, with Solomon's own words in the Book of Proverbs. For example : "For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age." Solomon expresses the same sentiment thus : "A hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." An apocryphal writer, speaking of the flight of time, says : "All those things are passed away as a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by ; and as a ship that passeth over the waves of the water, which, when it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the pathway of the keel in the waves ; or as when a bird hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be found ; but the light air, being beaten with the stroke of her wings and parted with the violent noise and motion of them, is passed through, and therein afterward no sign where she went is to be found." In contrast with this wordy description, hear Job express the same thought : "Now my days are swifter than a post ; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey."

Addison says that the English language, like all other European tongues, being naturally somewhat cold, has received great advantage from Holy Writ, — the figurative, glowing style of the Bible having infused warmth and beauty into it. The present English version of the Bible is the standard of the English language. Madame de Stäel says the same of Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language. The literary influence of this volume far exceeds that of any other writings on earth. Did the men who wrote it have no supernatural aid ? Were these astonishing peculiarities a mere matter of chance ?

The picture galleries of Europe are full of Scripture scenes. The works of the great masters of painting are Scripture subjects. Those poor fishermen, those humble "reporters" and



“note-takers,” as some are pleased to call them, have touched with heavenly fire the genius of Raphael, and Rubens, and Rembrandt, and Guido, and Da Vinci. One of the greatest evidences of power is to awaken thoughts and great conceptions in other minds. Who have done so much for the fine arts as the writers of the Bible? Were they careless, unassisted stenographers? Who will risk his reputation for learning and good taste, by such an assertion?

There is another remarkable fact connected with the Bible. While the Old Testament is, to a great extent, a record of the sins and follies of the Jewish nation, — setting them forth in the most odious light, as a nation of fickle and ungrateful rebels against God, — the Jews regard that book with little less than absolute worship. Here is a very singular fact; a whole nation binding to them, as a diadem, a book which exposes their sins and chastisements before all nations. If they were a humble, pious race, we might account for this from their humility and godly sorrow. But they were ever proud and scornful towards all other people. Yet they had kept the Old Testament so pure, that Christ did not reprove them for making the least alteration in the canon nor in the text; and to this day their Bible is their glory and joy. Is it usual for men to prize so highly the old indictments which were found against them, as to make them their common reading? Do men almost worship the books which expose their shame? If the Bible were mere histories by uninspired men, like the histories of Sanchoniathon, or Ctesias, or Herodotus, or Josephus, it could not have acquired such sanctity as the Old Testament has with the Jews. They say that every letter is precious; that on every point are suspended “mountains of sense.” He who says that the Bible was written like other books, with no divine superintendence, does not and cannot account for the Jewish attachment and reverence, with regard to it.

The books which the Bible has caused to be written, are an evidence of its being inspired. We need refer to only two of them: *Paradise Lost*, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These books could not have been written, had it not been that the Bible supplied the themes. It is worthy of notice, that those parts of these books are most impressive which most nearly imitate the style of the Bible. There must be something more, then, in the



narratives, descriptions, illustrations, as well as doctrines, of the Bible, than in those of any other books, or it could not surpass them, as it has done, in giving existence to some of the greatest productions of the human mind.

The literature of the Bible, including the books written to illustrate its language and histories, as well as doctrines, is of astonishing extent. Standing in the library of a Theological Seminary, and looking round on twelve or fifteen thousand volumes, and viewing the array of learning and talent presented, it is interesting to think that the Bible gave existence to the whole of it. Can there be no difference between such a book and the books which men wrote, as some say, "of their own heads?" If the language of the Bible is not inspired, in the sense of superintendence, guidance, and, when it was necessary, suggestion, so that God may be said to be the Author of it in a special sense, as he is of no other; if unaided men wrote from their imperfect recollections and by their uninstructed powers, the different parts of that book, then the whole science and the vast compass of biblical criticism is one of the greatest of mysteries. We may assert, that the immense labor bestowed upon the Bible is a strong proof that it naturally commends itself to the human mind, when not perverted against the truth, as the book, and the only book, that was given by inspiration of God.

We may understand the reason of the prolific influence of the Bible upon the human intellect, by recollecting such passages in it as these: "The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with a friend." "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." "After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua." "When the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge." "The Lord revealed himself to Samuel." "The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." "David, the son of Jesse, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me." "Well spake the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Esaias." "The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel." "The word of the Lord came unto Hosea," — "Joel," — "Amos," — "Micah." "God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." We are to remember, in this connection, that the New Testament records, in part, the fulfil-



ment of these prophecies in which the truth of God is involved. Such a record could not have been suffered to be a careless, disagreeing, contradictory account. Christ said to the writers of it: "The Holy Ghost shall be with you and bring all things to your remembrance." "He shall guide you into all truth."

There is no certain foothold for faith, if we abandon a belief in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. We are then without any sufficient guide in faith or practice. We may believe anything, or nothing, as each one's heart dictates. If a certain illustration does not suit our tastes, we then have only to say, The writer was not inspired. Does a certain argument press the conscience? Then, great allowance is to be made for oriental exaggeration. Is a certain truth uncongenial with our wishes? Then, our reason is as competent to judge what is right as Matthew or Peter. Is an assertion of Christ too solemn? Mark may have taken notes inaccurately, or lost some of them, or copied them incorrectly. Where are we, then? What a wild, bleak, howling ocean is around us; — no sun, no star; — as for the chart, we cannot believe it implicitly; and as for the needle, it never had plenary magnetism; and if it had, the compass has been so tampered with by ignorant hands that it cannot traverse. Here we are on the sea, driving out into the ocean of eternity; and what will become of us, only He who made us can certainly tell. Has God sent me on this tremendous voyage, laden with that for which a world might not be given in exchange, and everlasting consequences pending on my safe arrival, and yet has he provided me no guide but my poor reason, which never went on such a voyage before; while those who have performed it have never returned to pilot me on the way? The ocean is white with sails like mine; — all, all of them tossed and not comforted. Oh! send us a chart, whose directions shall be authentic; — a compass, whose needle shall so prove its full and true magnetic power, as to be like the finger of God to my ship.

Blessed be God, we who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures need not utter this prayer. We have a "sure word of prophecy." To the entire Bible our faith can respond, "These are the true sayings of God." No alleged inaccuracies, imperfections, ignorance, fallibility of the writers, detract in the least from the belief, that the Bible is deserving of the same reverence and submission as though it were addressed by the voice of God to our ears.



## REVIEW.

MEMOIR OF ROGER WILLIAMS, THE FOUNDER OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND. By James D. Knowles, Professor of Pastoral Duties in the Newton Theological Institution. Boston: Lincoln, Edmands & Co. 1834.

LIFE OF ROGER WILLIAMS, FOUNDER OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND. By William Gammell, A.M., Professor of Rhetoric in Brown University. Boston: Gould, Kendall & Lincoln. 1846.

WHOEVER wishes to read nearly all that can now be known of the pious patriarch of Providence, must, as the nostrum-venders say, "be particular to ask" for Knowles's Memoir. It is drawn up with great care and research, and with a degree of candor which, all things considered, is quite remarkable. It is what it purports to be, — a biography; and though it is said to be cumbered with old documents, yet these are the more interesting parts of it, being mostly letters written by the hero himself.

Mr. Gammell's book is a mere rhetorical oration, a thing in his own line. It gives not one newly recovered fact; it corrects not one popular error. It depicts but the bare outline of affairs. It is a decoction of Knowles; and, like dyspeptics' tea, is hot and weak. He gives a fancy portrait of Williams, chalked with one white crayon on a sable ground, the canvas being lamp-blackened with accusations against the Massachusetts colonists, who, to prevent Williams from tearing down their house, turned him out of doors. The chief merit of Mr. Gammell's book is its easy flowing style, simple and neat, and remarkably fit for discussing quiet subjects.

There are few historical personages who have been more praised for what they never did, and more over-praised for what they actually did, than Roger Williams. His merits were undoubtedly great, and so were his demerits. They lay in alternate streaks in his striped character; his faults being either the excesses or deficiencies of his virtues. His adorers, however, in their idolatrous attachment, are blind to all his peccadilloes. We should feel little inclination to lift up the hammer against their idol, if they confined their worship to an extravagant burning of incense in his praise. But when, in their fanatical zeal, they rush into the temple of history, and throw down the monu-



ments of our pilgrim fathers, and dig up their venerated bones to consume them on the altar of a false god, we cannot refrain from rebuking the sacrilege.

Of the early life of Roger Williams, but little is known. He was a native of Wales, and born in 1599. There is a dubious tradition that he received his education at Oxford, probably under the patronage of Sir Edward Coke. He was ordained in the Church of England; but his nonconformity obliged him to fly for refuge to the American wildernesses.

He landed at Hull, in February, 1631. In a few weeks, he became assistant to Mr. Skelton, at Salem. Here he was involved in so much trouble, by the intolerant cast of his opinions, that he had to retire to Plymouth, where the people were more inclined to a rigid separation from the Anglican Church. He there preached, as assistant to Mr. Smith, about two years. In 1633 he returned to Salem; and, after the death of Mr. Skelton in the year following, became sole pastor of the church. And now the storm, which had long been gathering, burst in peals which have not ceased to reverberate to this day. Our limits will not allow us to relate the litigations which ended in his condemnation for sedition, and for defamation of the magistrates and churches. The colonial government attempted to "send him home," as an unsuitable colonist, in a vessel which was about to sail for the mother country.\* To avoid a worse fate *there*, Mr. Williams fled, January, 1636; and, after suffering many hardships in the wilderness, succeeded in settling the famous little colony of Providence Plantations. Here he spent a long and useful life, though not very peaceful or happy. He and his associates carried with them the elements of explosion. Of his private life, after this removal, but little is recorded. He twice went to England, as agent for his colony, and died in 1683, at the age of eighty-four. In his last days he was rather poor, and dependent on the filial piety of his son.

It has been claimed for him, by Governor Hopkins, Knowles, and many others, that he was the *first* who ever pleaded in behalf

\* The action of the colonial government has been ably vindicated by Hon. John Quincy Adams, LL.D., in his discourse before the Massachusetts Historical Society, in 1843, pp. 25-30. The reader who may be desirous of seeing a full discussion of the alleged intolerance of our fathers, is referred to "Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England," vol. ii. 66-138.



of liberty of conscience ; and that, in his colony, such liberty was *first* allowed to the full extent. He has been greatly magnified, as being on these accounts vastly superior to the other fathers of New England. We propose to look into this claim, which bears so invidiously upon better men than he, as good as he doubtless was.

When the Protestant Reformation was established in Holland, a quarter of a century before Williams was born, liberty of conscience was allowed. The Low Countries became the open and safe asylum for the persecuted exiles of every land.\* Owen Felltham, in his "Brief Character of the Low Countries," says of Amsterdam : "It is a university of all religions, — the fair of all the sects, where all the pedlers of religion have leave to vend their toys." There is much jeering on the subject in the old satirists and dramatic writers. It was a common saying : "If any man has lost his religion, he may find it again there." The fact is so notorious, that it is mere folly to pretend that Rhode Island was the first commonwealth to adopt absolute toleration in matters of conscience.

Lord Baltimore, a Papist, established religious liberty in his colony of Maryland, in 1634, two years before Providence was settled. He extended this liberty to *all* professed Christians ; while Rhode Island, as we shall presently see, excluded Romanists from her franchise. Mr. Knowles's attempt to claim priority in this good work for his favorite colony will not stand examination, as it rests chiefly on subsequent legislation, which merely embodied what had been the original principle of the respective colonies.

Neither did the good people of Rhode Island uniformly carry out this great principle. At one time they were constrained, in self-preservation, to repress those singular fanatics, the Gortonists. These men were followers of Samuel Gorton, a self-styled "Professor of Mysteries." Having been sued at Boston, for a debt which had become due to a charitable trust in England, his behavior in court was so mutinous and abusive, that he was fined and expelled from the colony.† He repaired to Rhode Island, "where he affronted what little government they had with such

\* Brandt's Hist. i. 308.

† J. Cotton. Answer to R. Williams's Letter, p. 5.



intolerable insolencies, that he was then whipped and sent out of that colony." He next resorted to the Providence Plantations, where he so misconducted, that the settlers were enforced to seek the protection of Massachusetts against him and his outlaws.\* Though the name of Williams is not affixed to the petition, it was signed by his associates; and he must have acquiesced in the hard necessity. He thus wrote to the government of Massachusetts: "Mr. Gorton, having foully abused high and low at Aquetneck, (Newport,) is now bewitching and bemadding poor Providence."† The application to Massachusetts resulted, after some time, in the illegal seizure and punishment of poor Gorton. Mr. Williams keenly felt the divisions which distracted his unhappy colony. Sad must have been the troubles which constrained him, in an official letter on the subject of contested jurisdiction, written in his capacity of President of Providence Plantations, thus to address the General Court at Boston: "Honored Sirs, I cordially profess it before the Most High, that I believe it, if not only they, but ourselves and all the whole country, by joint consent, were subject to your government, it might be a rich mercy."‡

It ought to be remarked, that, when he lived at Salem, he was an offender of the same general class with the Gortonists. The laws, under which he had suffered exclusion, were the same which his own colony, though not under their jurisdiction, were compelled to invoke against Gorton and his crew. Could there be a stronger practical proof of the necessity, under which all infant colonies must lie, of legislating for the removal of every unsuitable member, whose presence and misdoing endanger the whole success of the enterprise?

In regard to the Quakers, Mr. Knowles frankly says: "If any persons had been guilty, in Rhode Island, of the acts which some individuals, calling themselves Quakers, practised in Massachusetts, they would have been punished. Mr. Williams, in his subsequent controversy with George Fox, expressed his approbation of the punishment of certain females in Massachusetts, for their shameless conduct, affirming it to be a perversion of terms to call the punishment of such actions, persecution."§ As it was, the Quakers were cruel tormentors to good Mr. Williams, and sadly

\* Callender, in R. I. Hist. Soc. Col. iv. 90. † Knowles, p. 184.

‡ Knowles, p. 285.

§ Ib. p. 298.



embittered and soured his old age. In 1655, they became out-laws in Rhode Island, in consequence of refusing both the oath of allegiance, and the affirmation or engagement to the same effect. The matter, however, was soon adjusted.\*

In 1663, the General Assembly of Rhode Island, in which Mr. Williams was one of the Assistants, by statute, excluded Roman Catholics, and all persons not Christians, from the privileges of freemen. When this fact was first stated in Holmes's Annals, it was denied, after laborious investigation, by Hon. Samuel Eddy. The fact, however, has since been confirmed by the publication of the *repealing statute*, passed in February, 1783, after the original Act had been in force a hundred and twenty years.† These things are mentioned, not to disparage that community; but simply to show that it was not so astonishingly in advance of the neighboring colonies, as some have fondly supposed.

It has also been ignorantly claimed, that Williams, in his "Bloody Tenet," published in 1644, was the first writer who ever argued in favor of religious liberty. Certain Baptists of London had entered their plea in the same behalf, some thirty years before: Helwisse and others, in 1615, and Leonard Busher, in 1614.‡ These also were preceded by Henry Jacob, who, so far as appears, was the true pioneer in this great argument. This excellent man was one of the fathers of Independency, and founded what is generally supposed to be the first Congregational Church ever organized in England; the same which, under his successor, removed to New England in 1634, and still flourishes at Barnstable, in Massachusetts. It was in 1609, that Mr. Jacob printed the first document which ever reasoned with the supreme civil authority for the principles of toleration. It is a quarto of forty-eight pages, addressed to the King, as "An Humble Supplication for Toleration, and Liberty to enjoy and observe the Ordinances of Jesus Christ in the Administration of his Churches, in lieu of Human Constitutions." This work, anticipating the labors of Mr. Williams by some forty years, leaves to him the title of one of the boldest, but not the first, asserters of religious liberty.

\* Mass. Hist. Soc. Col. xvii. 244.

† See the Act of repeal in Mass. Hist. Soc. Col. xxv, 243, 244.

‡ Crosby, Hist. of Bap. 1738, i. 269, etc.



A superiority has been asserted for him over the Massachusetts settlers, on account of his alleged better treatment of the Indians. He found great fault with our fathers for exercising sovereignty in this country, under a charter from the English monarch, and for not having rendered to the natives a fair equivalent for the possession of the soil. Yet he afterwards went to England, and procured just such charters for his own colony, first from the Parliament, and afterwards from Charles II.\* And as to the consideration given for the territory of Providence, he says himself, in a formal deed, signed and sealed by him in 1661: "I was the procurer of the purchase, *not by monies nor payment*, the natives being so shy and jealous, that monies could not do it, but by that language, acquaintance and favor with the natives, and other advantages which it pleased God to give me." † He lived in no greater peace with the Indians dwelling within his own borders, than did the "people of the Bay" for fifty years with those who inhabited within their jurisdiction. The wars which Massachusetts waged, during Mr. Williams's time, were with what we may call foreign Indians; and had his aid and approbation. ‡

In the matter of preaching the gospel to the natives, Mr. Williams, who is often said to have been zealous in that work, gave no great attention to it. Notwithstanding his boasted knowledge of their language, he did not avail himself of it for this highest of all purposes. He *declined* the solemn duty for want of such a commission for the purpose as the apostles had, and for want of plenary inspiration, which he held to be indispensable in such a business.§ Mr. Cotton at one time derived an opinion from Rev. xv. 8, that no considerable number of pagans could be converted to Christ till the downfall of Antichrist and the conversion of the Jews. This notion Mr. Williams "greedily caught at;" || and though Mr. Cotton gave it up, in view of the successful labors of the apostolical Eliot, Mr. Williams retained it, because it agreed with his sentiments as a "Seeker," to which we shall presently refer. We see not how his treatment of the original American race was any better than

\* Callender, R. I. Hist. Soc. Col. iv. 98.

† Staples's Annals, in R. I. Hist. Soc. Col. v. 30. More in Knowles, p. 411.

‡ See his Letter to Major Mason, in Mass. Hist. Soc. Col. Vol. I.

§ Callender in R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll. iv. 139.

|| Baillie's Dissuasive Vindicated, 1655, p. 90.



what they received from Winthrop and Bradford, if it were even as just and Christian.

It has likewise been claimed for Mr. Williams, that he was the father and founder of the American Baptists. Brooke and other historians gravely tell us, that he was banished from Massachusetts for his Baptist sentiments, that he founded the first church of that order in America, and that he was pastor of it till the time of his death. Thousands of intelligent persons entertain these opinions at this day.

When Mr. Williams left Plymouth for Salem, in 1633, the venerable Elder Brewster signified his fears "that Mr. Williams would run the same course of rigid separation and anabaptistry with Mr. John Smith," the noted se-baptist at Amsterdam, who first immersed himself, and then performed that office for his brethren. This expression of the worthy Ruling Elder shows his foresight, and how well he understood the tendency of the fiery Welshman's course. But there is not a particle of evidence, that he reached the end of that course during his residence at Salem. Among the numerous charges brought against him by magistrates and ministers, there is not the least mention of "anabaptistry." He was banished, according to the terms of his sentence in the record of the court, for sedition and defamation, in the year 1636. Some two or three years afterwards, he fell in, at Providence, with Mrs. Scott, a sister of the unhappy Mrs. Hutchinson. Under Mrs. Scott's tuition, he first renounced his own baptism, not as having received it in infancy, but because it was derived from the antichristian Church of England. He concluded that the ceremony ought to be repeated by the mode of immersion. In 1639, for want of an administrator better qualified, he was immersed by Ezekiel Holliman. He then returned the favor by immersing Holliman, and ten others.\* Here we might demand, as John Robinson did in regard to Smith, the se-baptist: "Into what church did he enter by baptism? Or, entering by baptism into no church, how could his baptism be true, by their own doctrine? Or his baptism not being true; nor he, by it, entering into any church, how could the baptism he administered be true, and into what church did the subjects enter by it?† Our Baptist brethren, we presume, have

\* Benedict's Hist. of Bap. i. 473. Knowles, p. 165.

† Of Religious Communion: Private and Public, &c., by J. Robinson. 1614, p. 48.



some method of settling these hard questions to their own satisfaction. But Mr. Williams was not so fortunate ; and in three or four months he renounced this baptism and fellowship, as unauthorized and insufficient. Governor Winthrop, in his Journal, under date of June or July, 1639, thus informs us : " At Providence, matters went on after the old manner. Mr. Williams and many of his company, a few months since, were in all haste re-baptized, and denied communion with all others ; and now he was come to question his second baptism, not being able to derive the authority of it from the apostles." " He conceived that God would *raise up* some apostolic power. Therefore he bent himself that way, expecting, as was supposed, to become an apostle ; and having a little before refused communion with all save his own wife, now he would preach and pray with all comers. Whereupon some of his followers left him, and returned back from whence they went." These statements are fully confirmed by other proofs ; and particularly by a letter of Richard Scott, inserted in George Fox's " New England's Fire-brand quenched." \* This is the Scott whose wife has the credit of having made a Baptist of Mr. Williams. Both man and wife afterwards became Quakers. Of Williams, Scott says : " I walked with him in the Baptist way, about three or four months, in which time he broke from the society, and declared at large the grounds and reason of it, that their baptism could not be right, because it was not administered by an apostle. After that, he set up a way of *seeking* with two or three that had dissented with him, by way of preaching and praying ; and there he continued a year or two, till two of the three left him." Of the eleven whom Williams immersed, it is known that four soon became Seekers ; three became Gortonists ; one became a Come-outer ; two submitted to the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, which amounted to a renunciation of " anabaptistry ;" and the other removed to Warwick. They seem to have speedily dispersed. Hence there is good reason to credit the tradition recorded by the excellent Baptist Callender, who says that the old men living in his time, who personally knew Mr. Williams, and many of the original settlers of Providence, never heard that Mr. Williams formed the Baptist church there ; but always ascribed that honor to another set of men than those immersed by Williams. That church has no record of those times,

\* Part II. p. 247.



except such as was compiled long afterwards, and is known to be very incorrect. The founders of Brown University, in 1770, erected their building on the original home-lot of the Rev. Chad Brown, on the ground of his having been the *first* minister of the Baptist church. It is certain that Mr. Williams was never a Baptist, except for a few months; and there is little or no reason to think that, during those few months, he gathered what is regarded as the mother-church of the immense American sisterhood.

Callender, writing in 1738, informs us, on the authority of many persons then living, who remembered the last ten or twenty years of Mr. Williams's life, that he did not worship with the Baptists. Sometimes, though not statedly or weekly, he preached in his own house; and once a month he went for that purpose to the trading-house of Mr. Smith, at Narraganset, where he addressed a few scattered English settlers.

According to his views as a Seeker, which he retained as long as he lived, "there was no regularly constituted church on earth, nor any person authorized to administer any church ordinance, nor could there be, until new apostles should be sent, for whose coming he was *seeking*." His great friend, Sir Henry Vane, and many others, at that day, held, as he did, that the ministry and ordinances of the church, except preaching, or "prophesying," as they termed it, were irretrievably lost during the papal apostacy.\*

In his lifetime, his position was well understood. In 1644, while he was in England, Baillie, a commissioner from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines, thus wrote to his constituents: "One Mr. Williams has drawn a great number after him to a singular independency, denying any true church in the world; and will have every man to serve God by himself alone. This man has made a great and bitter schism lately among the Independents (Congregationalists.)"† In another letter, addressed to Rev. David Dickson, Baillie says: "Sundry of the Independents are stepped out of the Church, and follow my good acquaintance Mr. Roger Williams, who says there is no church, no sacraments, no pastors, no church-officers nor ordinance in the world, nor has been since a few years after the apostles."‡ It is indeed to be lamented, that a man so religious as Mr. Williams should fall into such errors, and lie therein without rising again, for the last forty years of his life.

\* R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll. iv. 110.

† Baillie's Letters, No. 62, p. 24.

‡ Ib. Let. 73, p. 43.



It is to be regretted, too, that the worthy Baptists who value historical truth, must cease to glory in Roger Williams as a corner-stone of their order, which he utterly forsook. But they can spare him. They have many other names quite as worthy as his to command respect. Among them is the excellent President of Brown University, who has distinguished himself as the eulogist of Williams. But suppose he were to come out, and proclaim like Holliman's neophyte, that the Baptist churches are no churches, and their sacraments are no sacraments; that "the apostolical commission and ministry is long since interrupted and discontinued;" and that he could walk and worship with the immersed brethren no more! Would they still own him as a Baptist? How long would they delay to remind him, that, according to the College charter, none but a Baptist can fill that presidential chair?

#### OBSERVATIONS ON MEN, BOOKS AND THINGS.

THE ELECTION SERMON, by Rev. John H. Bisbee, is one of the best of the kind. We often wish that our legislature, on such occasions, could hear some of those faithful and fearless counsels which the puritan ministers dealt forth of old. As the best substitute now attainable, the legislature ought to make an appropriation, to be expended under the care of Mr. Joseph B. Felt, after it shall have made him Secretary of the State, in republishing in a volume as many as can be recovered of the election-sermons preached during the first century of the colony. We have read very many of them, like that of Urian Oakes, with admiration at the learning, wisdom and sound political morality, which they contain. Such a book, besides its intrinsic merits, would possess great historical value.— We observe that Mr. Bisbee, as many others have done, quotes, with high approbation, the motto which Hon. Abbott Lawrence proposes for our country: "Universal education, founded upon morals drawn from the Bible." For Mr. Lawrence and his noble motto we feel the highest respect. But as to "morals drawn from the Bible," we beg leave to intimate that it is wholly visionary to dream of plucking the apples *till you have planted the tree*. "Make the *tree* good," is the Saviour's maxim. Bible-morality will only spring from Bible-doctrine. It will not grow without a root; nor on any root but the great and fruitful truths of the Bible, early planted in the minds of the rising race, and copiously watered from on high.

THE MANN CONTROVERSY.— After the pamphlet of Rev. M. H. Smith, entitled "The Bible, the Rod, and Religion, in Common



Schools," had been some two months before the public, an elaborate reply appeared from Hon. Horace Mann. His "Sequel" is marked in almost every line with that abusive rhetoric, in which he is "hard to beat." His literary ferocity has, at last, made many people afraid of him; which is a bad sign in a public officer. A profound adorer of Mr. Mann gently touches this matter in a recent number of the Boston Courier: "Candor, also, requires me to say that Mr. Mann, in his portion of the controversy, has diluted his ink too much with sulphuric acid. Will he pardon one deeply interested in the cause to which he is devoted, if he says to him that his judicious friends never read his controversial writings without some mixture of pain?" His severity of retort on all occasions is the less excusable, because he has given occasion to strong suspicions as to the nature of the religious influence he is endeavoring to exert in the Schools. He has occasioned it by his studied reserve, coupled with what look like dark intimations, upon points of vital and fundamental importance. His associations, too, if a man may be known by the affinities he manifests, tend to deepen those suspicions. All persons of no religion, or next to none, espouse his cause, exult in his reputation, and applaud his proceedings. Every attack upon him, they resent as a personal wrong to themselves, and an injury to their systems. He and the pantheistic schemers seem to be on the best of terms. The "Christian World," the organ of transcendental Unitarianism, boasts of him as one who has been most active at spreading, in his official station, the "seminal principles" of its faith. All the periodicals of the infidel class, down to the Trumpet, the Chronotype and the Investigator, make common cause with Mr. Mann, and appear to be in full sympathy with him in all his contests. If he is willing to rest under the suspicions unavoidably excited by these circumstances, he is bound to respect the motives and feelings of those who cannot suppress those suspicions. There is no excuse for his "fiery savagery" in taking vengeance on that conscientious jealousy with which they guard the purity of the truth they love.—In about two weeks, Mr. Smith produced his "Reply to the Sequel," of which two editions were speedily exhausted. For a long time past, no controversy upon religious subjects has excited so much feeling, or received so much notice in the public prints. If no other good is to ensue, it may prevent the translation of Mr. Mann from his present office to the superintendency of the Boston Schools. Woe to the "Thirty-one Masters," if ever his scymetar shall be brandished over their heads!

SACRED AND MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.—This volume, of elegant air, by William B. Tappan, is the second of a series of his "revised poems." Complaint has been made of his poetry on account of the great inequality of merit in the different pieces. But who finds fault with a potato-patch, because all the tubers are not of the same bigness? Or who objects to the midnight heavens, because every star is not of the first magnitude? It is very well that all the bricks in a dead wall should be pressed in the same mould; but the luxuriance of living nature loves not the evenness of uniformity. Probably the



various grades of excellence in Mr. Tappan's verses are not more numerous than the diverse tastes of his readers. It is a good thing for readers to exercise their taste and discrimination in culling the beauties of the flower-bed ; and sure we are that a delightful cluster can be gathered from the blooming plat before us. The strains which waken "the isles of the South," and celebrate the midnight "on Olive's brow," and breathe of "the hour of peaceful rest," must ensure to their writer a spotless and lasting fame. Who has not heard them chaunted by lips beloved, now singing amid celestial song? How has the soul floated in them on the waves of sacred harmony ; and memory has been haunted by each well-remembered cadence, till we could apply the lines of Wordsworth :

"The music in my heart I bore  
Long after it was heard no more."

THE TEACHERS' INSTITUTE. — This is a book of hints for young teachers, by William B. Fowle, who says, in the titlepage, that he is author of thirty-one school-books! This must be modesty of the kind which "stayed the coach full three doors off;" for in the preface the number swells, like Falstaff's foes in buckram, to "more than forty school-books." His passion for multiplying volumes of this kind reminds us of the speech which, as he assures us, was made to him when a school-boy, by old white-wigged Master Tileston: "You gnarly wretch, you are never satisfied!" The "Teachers' Institute" is full of the new-fangled quirks and contrivances in teaching, by which boys and girls make play of their learning ; somewhat as certain merry evangelists have undertaken to convert hardened sinners, by joking and laughing them into serious piety. The main abomination in Mr. Fowle's book, which is enough to sink it to deserved perdition, is its infidel treatment of a part of the canonical Scriptures. The contempt which he pours upon the teachings of Solomon, as "coming from an immoral prince," (page 251,) would have met its just reward in the days of that Jewish disciplinarian, who not only advised wholesome correction for the disobedient child, but prescribed "a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back." We wonder not that Mr. F. trembles at the very name of Solomon. Had Mr. F. felt the twig as thoroughly as he should have done when he was young, he might have had more sense now than to set himself up as wiser than Solomon, to whom the Lord repeatedly appeared ; and to whom "God gave wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart even as the sand that is on the sea-shore," rendering him "wiser than all men." As to his moral character, we are divinely told by Him who knows the heart, that "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David, his father." And though his religious character is far from unexceptionable, and especially in his old age deteriorated greatly, yet his sins are recorded, as the sins of almost every good man whose life is narrated in the Bible, not to bring into contempt the Scriptures which they were inspired to write, but that we might be warned that the best of men are imperfect, and incur the displeasure of God by their sins. If we are to have any Bible at all, it must be penned by *imperfect* men, under the *infallible*



guidance of the Holy Ghost. Those holy men, Abraham, Moses and David, were, in some respects, "immoral princes;" and many of the chief prophets and apostles had their manifest faults; and, according to Mr. F.'s logic, the religion revealed to us by their means must give place to the holier cogitations of those who, like him, are "wise in their own conceit." Had Mr. F. been better imbued with the elevated morality of the Book of Proverbs, he would not have polluted the youth of our State, by sending out those "School District Libraries," some of them abounding in the grossness of the older English literature, and from which Barnum Field, Esq., some three years ago, collected that shocking mass of vulgar, profane and obscene expressions, almost too infamous to bear exposure.

REVIVAL PREACHING.—There are many pious and amiable ministers, who are zealously discharging the duties of their sacred office, but who deeply lament the apparent fruitlessness of their labors. And yet, if any one were to tell them frankly wherein the difficulty lay, they would not believe him;—nay, they would feel hurt and offended. It would astonish them to be told, *that they do not fully preach the Gospel!* They do not clearly exhibit and forcibly impress those great doctrines, or grand spiritual facts, in which lies the power of divine truth over the conscience and the heart. The utter depravity of human nature, the entire sinfulness of the whole life of every unregenerate man, the ruined and helpless condition of the soul, the necessity of that change of heart which can only be wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the free forgiveness which is obtained by faith in Christ alone without mixture of human merit,—these, and the like solemn facts, are not brought to bear upon the mind with all their weight and power. They are assumed in preaching as true, as matters of course; and are often touched upon by way of allusion and inference. But were they to be drawn out from the Bible in their full extent, it would be like unsheathing the sword of the Spirit to the full length of the blade: it would flash in the sun-light: its biting edge would cut deep into the hardest heart. Clear, discriminating, soul-searching preaching in this strain would strike many of our drowsy congregations with all the force of novelty; and would arrest attention, and awaken conviction, to incomparably better purpose than all the new metaphysics and new measures which will be contrived to the end of time. It is to be feared that many churches would hardly endure instruction so rousing, so humbling, so terrible to the spirit of self-indulgence, so killing to the pride of the heart. Yet is there nothing so effective, with the blessing of God, as the style of preaching strikingly described by Cotton Mather, as that "which most exalts Christ and abases man."